

42-1-1459
C-2

Breaking Down the **BARRIERS**

PUBLISHED BY ALBERTA TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES

February 1999



International Year of Older Persons Launched

The International Year of Older Persons (IYOP) is now here and many activities are underway. Two high profile senior citizens, Flora MacDonald and Don Harron, were scheduled to be in Alberta in February to further promote this special year. Flora and Don were scheduled for morning radio talk shows in both Calgary and Edmonton, as well as afternoon public meetings. We hope you had the opportunity to hear or see them during their time in Alberta.

Several municipalities have made a commitment to actively participate in and celebrate the year. If you want to find out what your community is doing, contact your local municipality, Family and Support Services, or Alberta Community Development. These agencies are frequently located in the "provincial" building of a community.

Accessible, barrier free transportation is a major issue for many seniors. Take this opportunity to inform and raise the

awareness among community members and local politicians.

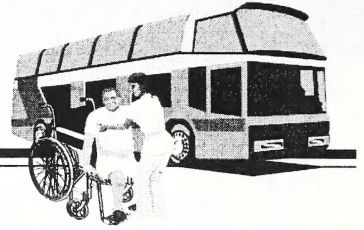
Alberta Transportation and Utilities has prepared a website describing its efforts to make driving safer for older persons, to maintain driver health and to improve accessibility for all persons with mobility limitations. This website can be accessed through the overall AT&U website.

If your community is planning a special event or activity focusing on barrier free transportation please contact Sara Wong, Policy Development, Alberta Transportation and Utilities at (780) 427-9781. This way we can include it in *Breaking Down the Barriers* newsletter.

For more information about IYOP, contact:

Marlene Kurt
Alberta Community Development
(780) 427-2705 or,
www.gov.ab.ca/mcd/seniors/iyop.htm

Front-line Greyhound Staff Are Ready to Serve You Better



When we think of accessibility, we often think of vehicles or the structure of buildings. Another important factor is how front line staff treat and serve the customer.

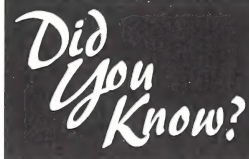
Greyhound developed a sensitivity training program in 1994 for all its agents. The sessions were designed to train front-line personnel to appropriately assist and communicate with customers who have disabilities. In response to the recent extension of accessible services, Greyhound is in the process of establishing two hours of further sensitivity training and two hours to review the Intercity Bus Code of Practice.

The objectives of the program are to:

- help front-line personnel identify passengers who require special assistance
- increase the awareness of front-line personnel about the ways to communicate with and assist elderly persons and persons with disabilities
- teach front-line personnel how to provide physical assistance to people who require guiding
- ensure front-line personnel are aware of the company's policies about the carriage of elderly persons and persons with disabilities.

For more information, contact:

Lorraine Card
Manager, Safety and Driver Administration
Greyhound
(403) 260-0758



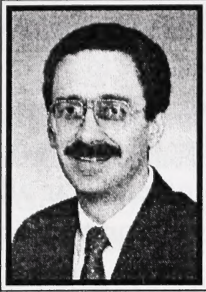
The Calgary Handi-Bus Association began to analyze their existing computer software and hardware back in September 1997 to ensure Year 2000 compliance.

They are moving toward a more current version of their scheduling and dispatching software, Trapeze, which is Y2K compliant and will ensure efficient scheduling and dispatching to accommodate their customers. The Association plan to have the conversion completed by April 1999.



(Source: Chapters, Winter 1998 Edition, Calgary Handi-Bus Association)

Profile – Member of the Advisory Committee on Barrier Free Transportation



Name: Pat Pellegrino

Occupation: General Manager and Chief Executive Officer of the Calgary Handi-Bus Association

How did you become interested in transportation issues?

"I actually started my career in education. I was a teacher and later on a high school administrator in Montreal. In 1984, my interest in the human resource field took me to Ottawa, to Voyager Intercity Bus Group. After six years working in both human resources and later on operations, I decided it was time to move on to new challenges. I chose Calgary and the Handi-Bus Association. My choice reflected both my professional interests but also, by that time, my personal interest in the accessible transportation field. I have a son with Duchennes Muscular Dystrophy. I had realized the need for accessible, available and affordable transportation. Another major factor was that I did not want to move to Toronto!

Since then I have had an extremely rewarding job and I particularly enjoy the interaction with our customers. All customers bring a perspective that we can learn from.

I am also a board member of the Canadian Urban Transportation Association (CUTA). I have been involved for the past three terms, and I have been the chairman of CUTA's Accessible Transportation Committee."

What is your role on the committee and why did you become involved?

"With my varied background I bring a mix of experience to the table, including administrative and operational. I also represent the consumer and I have a knowledge of specialized transit. I want to be in a role where I can learn and assist in the development of accessible transportation and I'd like to influence change and provide advice to others as it relates to barrier free transportation.

I became involved in the Advisory Committee on Barrier Free Transportation early on in 1991. There is so much expertise that I can learn from, and the committee and AT&U live by the motto "*Learning*

by Doing." We explore possibilities and try new things. For example, when we needed to develop a new scheduling system in Calgary, the committee and the department assisted us. Now we are all looking and working toward establishing a system of viable, accessible taxi services.



The committee really is a co-operative effort. It brings community organizations, consumers, providers and government together in an effort to deal with a variety of issues related to barrier free transportation."

What are the major concerns or issues you have related to accessible transportation?

"Accessible transportation has to become part of transportation. Our work is done when all services are accessible to all people, and we don't think of it as special or parallel systems. Accessible transportation must become a core ingredient in all our services across our communities, not a special cause or an add on. We have to keep on working until the term does not exist any more and the thinking has changed. We wanted to be there in year 2000. I don't know if that will be possible but we are making progress."

Did You Know?

In the fall of 1998, Greyhound conducted a facility audit of their 500

Canada-wide agencies to determine their level of accessibility and to better accommodate passengers. The audit addressed:

- ❑ entrance to the location
- ❑ ticket office accessibility
- ❑ washrooms
- ❑ availability of a wheelchair and/or washington chair to assist with boarding.

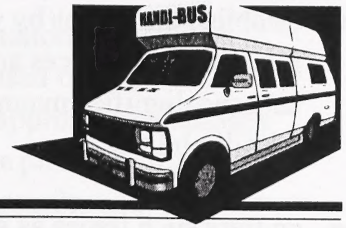
The information has been collected and is in the process of being entered into a database that will provide passengers with information on the agency/terminal of both departure and destination.

The system is expected to be operational by March 1, 1999. Passenger sales agents will then be able to provide this information to passengers making reservations for travel on an accessible coach.

In the interim, should you require additional information, contact:

Lorraine Card
Manager, Safety and Driver
Administration, Greyhound
(403) 260-0758

Work Continues on Accessible Vehicle Standards



Work on accessible vehicle standards for Alberta continues, with provisions developed by the Barrier Free Accessible Vehicle Standards subcommittee being added to existing regulations dealing with wider equipment, inspections and safety matters. The focus is on handi-bus vehicles and the package has gone forward for legislative review.

Work also continues on updating CSA standards, but this is not expected to hold up the approval of the amended Alberta regulations. Jim Bedingfield, Director,

Vehicle Safety, Alberta Transportation and Utilities, Alberta representative and chair of the subcommittee, will be attending a national meeting at the end of February or beginning of March 1999. Further information will be available on the results of this meeting in our June 1999 Newsletter.

For more information, contact:

Jim Bedingfield, Director
Vehicle Safety
Alberta Transportation and Utilities
(780) 427-8901

The Intercity Bus Code Comes Into Practice



Have you heard about the new voluntary intercity bus code?

The code came into effect in October 1998 on a voluntary, two-year, trial basis.

Bus operators are committed to enhancing their scheduled intercity network in Canada to provide access to persons with disabilities. Services will be provided through a combination of accessible equipment and facilities, as well as personnel who have been trained to assist

passengers with disabilities.



The Intercity Bus Code of Practice identifies the means by which scheduled intercity bus services will be provided in a safe and dignified manner to travellers with disabilities. It is designed to:

- improve accessibility of travel by intercity buses for persons with disabilities by broadly outlining services provided

- ❑ establish the means by which scheduled intercity bus services are provided in a safe and dignified manner to travellers with disabilities
- ❑ address such issues as signage, lighting, stairs, handrails, floors, armrests and emergency exits
- ❑ cover services that will be provided automatically, services requiring advanced notice and services provided on request that do not require advanced notice — as well as the rules with respect to attendants who accompany

the person with a disability, damaged or lost mobility aids, training, rate schedules and timetables.

If you wish to learn more about the code or read it in its entirety, it is available on Transport Canada's website:
<http://www.tc.gc.ca/policy/accessibility>.



You can also access a hard copy, a copy in Braille or an audio cassette by telephoning Transport Canada's, Accessible Transportation Unit at:

**1-800-665-6478 or
 TTY @ 1-800-823-3823.**

Accessibility Initiatives Discussed at Federal Advisory Committee Meeting



Transport Canada invited all provinces and territories to attend the November 16/17, 1998 meeting of the federal Minister of Transport's Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation (ACAT). Alberta was asked to make a presentation on its accessibility initiatives.

The Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation is a national stakeholder committee reporting directly to the Minister of Transport and is composed mainly of consumer and carrier representatives. Alberta's ACAT members represent 20 per cent of the participants on this committee.

There were a number of interesting presentations and discussions held on:

- ❑ the federal government's role in accessibility
- ❑ accessible vehicle standards (including taxis)
- ❑ continuing responsibilities of governments under deregulation and devolution
- ❑ Transportation Development Centre initiatives
- ❑ Canadian Transportation Agency activities
- ❑ aviation safety.

Minister of Transport, David Collette, noted that the federal government would continue to work with persons with disabilities and service providers to improve accessibility. Several ACAT members suggested that the federal government should take a more aggressive leadership role in promoting better accessibility.



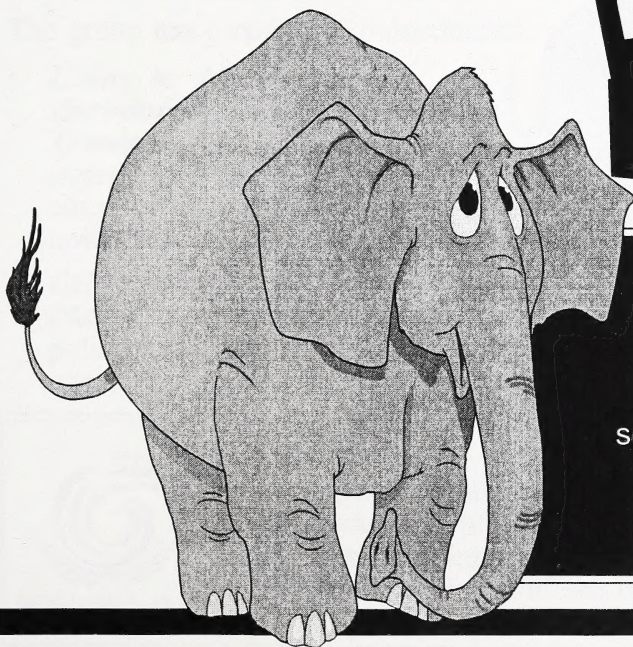
Transport Canada's
Transportation Development
Centre described ongoing

projects ranging from a portable bus lift to a "way finding in air terminals" demonstration project at the Edmonton International Airport.

Alberta Transportation and Utilities' presentation focused on our basic approach. This approach encourages initiatives to come primarily from the accessibility community with government acting as a facilitator. The strong support of successive transportation ministers, including the Honourable Walter Paszkowski, and of the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities, was noted as a contributing factor to the success of this approach.

For more information on ACAT, contact:

Transport Canada
Accessible Transportation Unit
1-800-665-6478 or
TTY @ 1-800-823-3823



DON'T FORGET

To access key information
on most inter-community
scheduled bus, rail and air
services in Alberta, visit AT&U's
website at

<http://www.tu.gov.ab.ca>

Breaking Down the Barriers is published by Alberta Transportation and Utilities to provide information about transportation issues of interest to persons with disabilities and related organizations. It is distributed to municipalities, service providers, provincial organizations and consumer groups in Alberta. To be added to the distribution list, phone (780) 427-7944 or dial 310-0000 for a toll free connection outside Edmonton.

The views and opinions expressed in ***Breaking Down the Barriers*** do not necessarily reflect those of the Editorial Board or Alberta Transportation and Utilities. Any article in this publication may be reproduced, provided credit is given to the newsletter.

Editorial Board:

- ▣ **Peter Dawes**, Senior Policy Advisor, Passenger Transportation, Policy Development, **Tel.** (780) 415-0687, **Fax** (780) 422-1070, or **e-mail** pdawes@tu.gov.ab.ca
- ▣ **Sara Wong**, Policy Advisor, Surface Policy and Barrier Free, Policy Development, **Tel.** (780) 427-9781, **Fax** (780) 422-1070, or **e-mail** swong@tu.gov.ab.ca
- ▣ **Terry Lotzer**, Editor, Communications, **Tel.** (780) 422-0881, **Fax** (780) 466-3166, or **e-mail** tlotzer@tu.gov.ab.ca

Alberta
TRANSPORTATION
AND UTILITIES